

Strategy through Board Games

(Instructor - Professor Priyank Narayan)

A board game is a universe in itself; the rules are the laws of physics or social norms, the board is the physical environment, cards function as resources or catalysts and dice introduce randomness. Much like the universe we're subjected to, the board game tests its players by making us communicate in unusual and uncomfortable ways, or encouraging us to take giant lateral leaps in thinking. Games can immerse us in hilarity, strengthen our connections with friends and family, and significantly stretch our minds.

In this course, we explore five curated board games that have been selected for their valuable lessons in the corporate world. Monopoly may be the world's favorite business-themed game, one that satisfies a certain kill-or-be-killed urge. But it's not necessarily the best one to hone your management skills or teach you what you need to win in business today. These games often involve exciting and complex game mechanics that involve math, logic, probability, negotiation, bluffing, and building relationships and alliances.

Class Structure

In this course, we will explore different strategies through a board game in each class. Each class will consist of three parts –

1. Introduction to the Game of the Day and playing the game.
2. Address by the guest speaker(s), followed by Q&A and playing with the speaker.
3. Analysing the games: the tactics, the strategies, and how these strategies can be implemented in business as well as daily lives.

We will be looking at different games throughout the course. This includes – Bridge, Poker, Catan, and Pandemic.

The main ideas students will learn from this course are:

- The difference between long-term thinking (strategy) and short-term thinking (tactics) and how the two interact with each other
- Several ideas from probability theory, game theory, and economics help sharpen their skills in tactics
- The fact that there can be different paths to success, and how to choose one that makes the most sense for you (depending on your strengths, as well as an awareness of what others are choosing)
- The difference between zero-sum games and non-zero-sum games and how in many cases, cooperation results in much better outcomes than direct competition
- And most importantly, something that is complex to learn, challenging to master, and very educational can still be fun.

Grading Structure

We will finalise this later, but the grading will be mostly based on your active participation in the class and a report on what you learnt from the game of the day.

Class Timings

Monday, 6:20 - 9:30 PM (every alternate week)

Attendance Policy

100% attendance is recommended.

Course Teaching Staff

Instructor: Professor Priyank Narayan

TA: Bhumika Mittal

Special Mention: Kavya Satish (as she played a vital role in designing the course curriculum)